

**Walking
Scotland**

Your national walking and wheeling charity

Scottish Walking and Wheeling Survey 2025



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Foreword

I am delighted to share the findings from the Scottish Walking and Wheeling Survey 2025. As we look towards the Scottish Parliament election in 2026, these insights come at an important time for Scotland’s future.

This is the third edition of the report, following previous editions in 2019 and 2023. Together, they build a detailed picture of how people walk and wheel across the country, and how this is changing over time.

It’s encouraging to see that an increasing number of people in Scotland are walking at least several times a week (86% in 2025, compared to 85% in 2023 and 81% in 2019). Walking is evidently becoming part of more people’s daily routines, helping them stay active and connected.

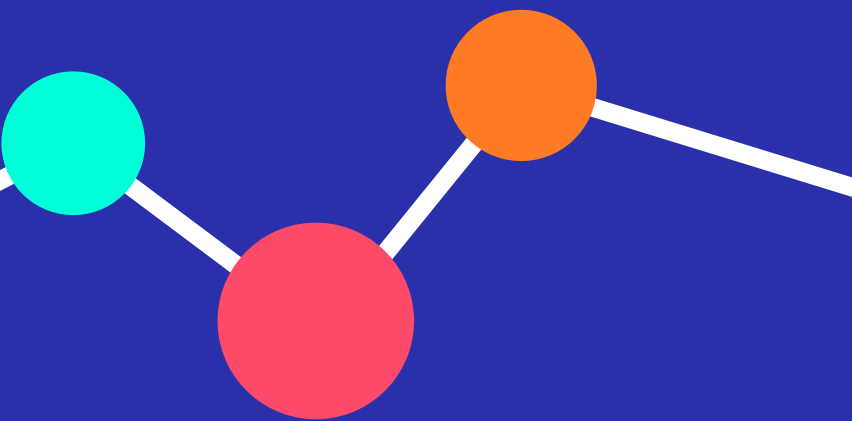
But we still have more to do. Only 57% walk every day, and that tells us we must continue to address barriers and create conditions that make walking and wheeling an easy, natural choice for everyone.

This research gives a clear direction of travel. It shows that where paths and local environments are safe, accessible and well-maintained, people will choose to walk and wheel more often. It highlights where satisfaction lags behind expectation, and where targeted investment will have the greatest impact. These insights are crucial as we look to create a healthier, more sustainable Scotland.

We know that more people walking and wheeling daily can help improve some of society’s biggest challenges, from health inequalities to the climate-nature emergency. Using these insights, as well as our experience and knowledge, Walking Scotland will continue to work with the Scottish Government, local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and communities to champion everyday walking and wheeling.

Together, we want to make sure everyone has the opportunity and motivation to walk more every day, creating a happier, healthier and greener Scotland for us all.

Kevin Lafferty
Chief Executive Officer, Walking Scotland



The approach

56 Degree Insight was commissioned to undertake a national survey of the Scottish population in summer 2025.

The research wanted to answer the following questions:

- » **Does everyone walk, and what do they think about walking?**
 - » What motivates different population groups to walk and wheel?
 - » Do the barriers to walking and wheeling vary across the population?
 - » How can we increase levels of walking and wheeling amongst target groups?
- » **Do people walk every day?**
 - » To what extent is walking and wheeling included in everyday routines?
 - » To what extent is convenience a factor when deciding to walk or wheel?
 - » What is the relationship between walking, wheeling and other modes of transport?
- » **Where do people walk?**
 - » What types of place do people walk and wheel in?
 - » What do people think about their local community as a place to walk and wheel in?
 - » How accessible to home are the places that could be walked or wheeled to?

The methods used and timings were consistent with similar surveys we carried out in 2019 and 2023. An online survey approach was used with a sample drawn from a quality assured online panel, providing robust population coverage.

Fieldwork took place from 16 June to 7 July 2025 with a total sample of 2,009 adults resident in Scotland interviewed over two elements.

A sample of 1,021 adults surveyed with sampling quotas to ensure a representative distribution on the basis of gender, age, social grade and place of residence.

A further sample of 988 adults who are members of population sub-groups of interest including ethnic minorities, residents of rural areas, people with disabilities and smaller local authority areas. These sample boosts ensured that in the reporting of results sufficient numbers of participants in these key groups of interest were included to allow robust analysis.



Does everyone walk, and what do they think about walking?

57% of Scottish adults walk or wheel every day

What motivates different population groups to walk and wheel?

Over half (57%) of Scottish adults walk or wheel every day, an increase on the level recorded in 2023 (52%). Most of the remainder walk several times a week (29%), but almost 1 in 10 walk less than once a week or never (9%).

While in the whole population 57% normally walk every day, this percentage was higher amongst people aged under 45 (64%), people with children in their household (62%), people who described their health as very good (70%) and dog owners (71%). Those aged 55-75, those living in urban areas on the outskirts of towns and those who described their health as bad or very bad were less likely to walk every day (42%, 51% and 44% respectively).

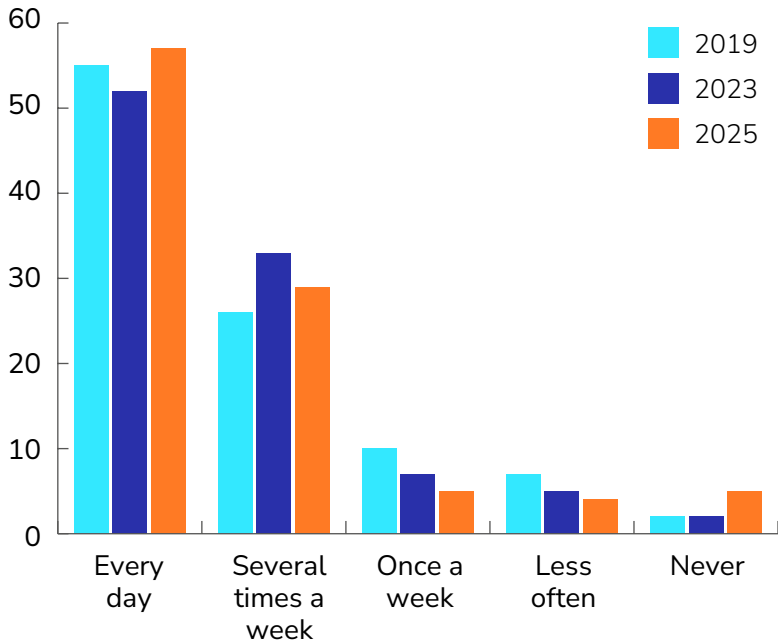


Figure 1: Overall walking and wheeling frequency

Going to local shops and services, exercise and leisure were the most common motivations for frequent walking (54%, 53% and 45% respectively).

Motivations for frequent walking	Every day	Several times a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	Once every two to three months	Less often	Never	Net several times a week or daily
Going to local shops and services	15%	39%	18%	8%	2%	4%	13%	54%
Exercise	23%	30%	14%	7%	2%	6%	18%	53%
Leisure	15%	29%	18%	11%	5%	6%	16%	45%
Going to work	18%	20%	5%	4%	2%	4%	47%	38%
Exercising the dog	22%	15%	7%	3%	2%	3%	48%	37%
Visiting family or friends	6%	21%	22%	17%	6%	8%	19%	26%
Going to a railway station, bus/tram stop or other transport terminal as part of a longer journey	6%	19%	12%	15%	9%	17%	23%	25%
Accompanying someone who is going to school/college or university (e.g. your children)	10%	14%	6%	4%	2%	7%	57%	24%
Informally suggested, signposted or advised by a health professional	5%	12%	8%	8%	6%	13%	47%	17%
Formal referral or prescription by a health professional	5%	8%	7%	14%	7%	13%	45%	13%
Going to school/college or university for your own studies	4%	7%	6%	3%	2%	8%	71%	11%

Figure 2: Walking and wheeling frequency by purpose

Men were more likely than women to walk more than once a week due to a formal referral or prescription by a health professional, to visit local shop and services, to go to a public transport terminal, for leisure or to go to work.

People aged 16 to 34 were the most likely to walk to go to school or college or for leisure or exercise purposes.

Nearly 9 in 10 (87%) walked or wheeled for any purposes in the previous month, a similar percentage to 2023 (89%).

Around two in three walked for either leisure or exercise (66%), while over half walked to reach a public transport link (58%), or to go to local shops and services (57%).

(See appendix, page 40 for Figure 3: Walking and wheeling during the previous month).

People aged under 35, people with children in their household, and people with no long-term illness or conditions were the most likely to have walked in the last month for any of the purposes listed.

Most Scottish adults enjoy walking because of the health and wellbeing benefits. The vast majority agree they enjoy it because it is good for their health (78%) and that it benefits both their physical and mental health (76%).

Well over half also agree that they would like to walk more often for both leisure and routine purposes (68% and 63% respectively), that it's better for nature than taking the car (62%) and a more affordable mode of transport (61%).

76% of Scottish adults think walking benefits both their physical and mental health

Attitudes to walking and wheeling	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Net agree
I enjoy it because it is good for my health	40%	37%	13%	3%	3%	78%
I choose to walk or wheel because it benefits my physical health	40%	36%	14%	5%	2%	76%
I choose to walk or wheel because it benefits my mental health/wellbeing	40%	34%	15%	4%	3%	74%
I enjoy it because it clears my head and helps me concentrate	38%	36%	17%	4%	3%	73%
I enjoy it because it helps me relax	35%	37%	16%	5%	3%	72%
I would like to be able to walk/wheel more often for leisure purposes	33%	36%	20%	5%	4%	68%
I would like to be able to walk/wheel more often for routine purposes (e.g. going to shops, going to work)	29%	35%	24%	6%	4%	63%
Where possible, I prefer to walk/wheel because it is better for nature than taking the car	29%	33%	23%	7%	5%	62%
Where possible, I prefer to walk/wheel because it is more affordable	28%	33%	24%	9%	4%	61%
Where possible, I prefer to walk/wheel because it less likely to contribute to climate change than taking the car	25%	31%	26%	8%	7%	55%
Where possible, I prefer to walk/wheel because it is more convenient than taking the car	23%	29%	24%	12%	9%	52%
I walk/wheel because I don't have access to a car	18%	16%	12%	12%	39%	34%
I only walk/wheel places if I have no option	13%	19%	21%	21%	23%	33%

Figure 4: Attitudes to walking and wheeling

Health and wellbeing were also seen as key benefits of walking and wheeling by the majority of the population in 2019 and 2023 (note statements included in the survey have changed impacting on comparability). Also, in

2023 very similar percentages agreed that they would like to walk or wheel more often. (See appendix, page 40 for Figure 5: Attitudes to walking and wheeling – 2019, 2023, 2025).

Do the barriers to walking and wheeling vary across the population?

Asked to share anything that makes it harder to walk or wheel on a day to day basis, almost 1 in 5 stated nothing limited them (18%), with the most common themes in responses relating to health issues and physical limitations (23% overall, increasing to 31% amongst the 55 and over age group), time constraints (17% overall, increasing to 22% amongst the 16 to 34 age group), weather conditions (14% overall, increasing to 20% among 16 to 34-year-olds).

A higher percentage of those with children in their household stated that time constraints were a barrier (22%) and more of those with a long-term illness or disability mentioned health issues (43%).

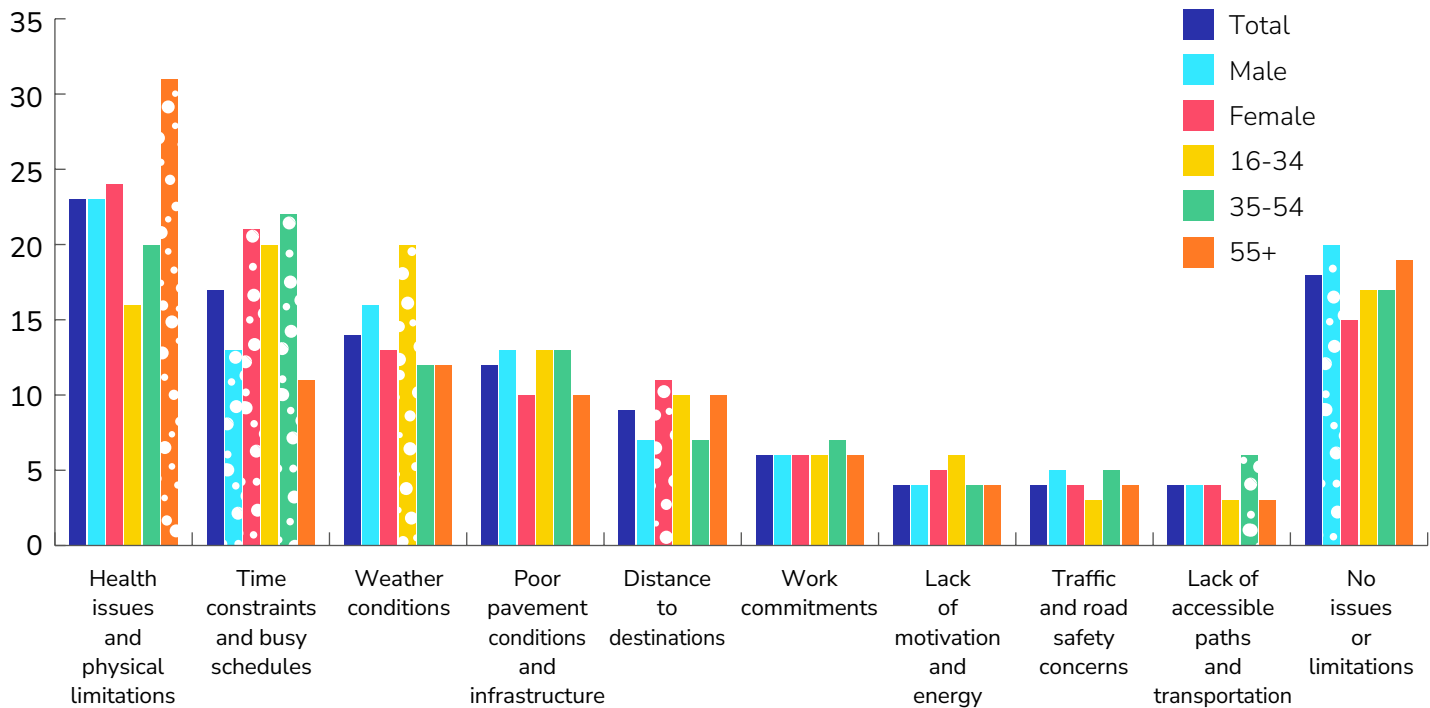


Figure 6: Barriers to walking and wheeling by sex and age
(Statistically significantly higher results for sub group highlighted with **pattern**)



Some examples of responses provided ...

Bad weather, like heavy rain or strong winds, often makes it harder for me to walk as much as I'd like on a day-to-day basis. Uneven pavements and a lack of safe crossing points also pose significant challenges.

The streets are very busy with cars, there is a problem with litter and dog fouling, pavements can be very uneven, and of course the good old Scottish weather.

Time constraints can make it difficult. For example, I have to be at work for a certain time or I have to be home for my children, etc.

I live in a rural area, which is lovely for pleasure walks. However, I am unable to walk to shops etc. as they are too far away.

I have fibromyalgia which makes it difficult to walk for extended periods of time.

The nearby streets are not suited or equipped well for wheelchair users.

How can we increase levels of walking and wheeling amongst target groups?

Asked what factors would encourage them to walk or wheel more often, the most common responses related to safety, better paths locally and having someone to walk with.

As shown in Figure 7 below, the factors selected varied by demographic group, in particular by sex and age.

Women were more likely than men to select the following factors:

- » Feeling safer when walking after dark (39% vs 24% of men)
- » Someone to walk with (35% vs 27% of men)
- » Better lighting along pavements and paths in my local area (28% vs 20% of men).

Also comparing results by age:

- » Those aged 16 to 24 were more likely than older age groups to select factors relating to feeling safer (39% after dark and 31% during the day), having someone to walk with (43%), shops and facilities close to where they live (32%) and more information about places to walk (25%)
- » People aged 35 to 54 were more likely to state that cheaper public transport fares would encourage them to walk more often (23%)
- » Those aged 55 and over were more likely to select more public toilets (30%) or more seating on paths in their local area (28%).

Changes that would encourage walking/wheeling	Total	Male	Female	16-34	35-54	55+
Feeling safer when walking after dark	32%	24%	39%	39%	30%	28%
Better quality pavements and paths in my local area	32%	32%	31%	34%	29%	32%
Someone to walk with	31%	27%	35%	43%	29%	24%
More public toilets	26%	24%	27%	20%	25%	30%
Shops and facilities closer to where I live	24%	24%	24%	32%	23%	20%
Better lighting along pavements and paths in my local area	24%	20%	28%	31%	24%	19%
More seating along pavements and paths in my local area	23%	22%	25%	21%	20%	28%
Feeling safer when walking during the day time	22%	20%	24%	32%	21%	17%
More safe places to cross the road in my local area	21%	20%	22%	27%	23%	15%
Cheaper public transport fares	20%	20%	20%	21%	23%	16%
More information about places where I could walk	20%	19%	20%	25%	19%	17%
Better links to public transport/more regular public transport	20%	18%	21%	22%	19%	18%
Less traffic in my local area	18%	21%	16%	22%	19%	15%
Less pavement parking	18%	19%	17%	14%	19%	19%
Measures to reduce the volume and speed of traffic locally	16%	16%	15%	18%	16%	14%
More signposted paths in my local area	14%	14%	13%	13%	12%	15%
Better information on sustainable transport options in my area	10%	12%	8%	13%	10%	8%

Figure 7: Changes that would encourage walking and wheeling by sex and age (Statistically significantly higher results for sub group highlighted in **bold**)

The impact of technology and counting steps on levels of walking

Around half (51%) of adults in Scotland use a wearable device such as a smartwatch or fitness tracker which measures daily steps or wheeling activity. This percentage was highest amongst younger age groups (60% of those aged under 35 vs 41% for those aged 55 and over), those with children at home (63%), residents or urban centre areas (59%) and dog owners (62%).

Of those who use a wearable device, around 2 in 3 check or pay attention to their daily steps or wheeling at least once a day (65%). This percentage was highest amongst those who normally walked every day (70% checked steps) and women (69%).

Of those who use a wearable device, just over half (54%) stated that it had encouraged them to walk or wheel more, and 31% stated that it had helped them to maintain their usual level of activity. Just 13% stated that it had not impacted their walking or wheeling activity.

Groups most likely to state that using a wearable device had encouraged them to walk more included those who checked it at least once a day (64% walked more), women (59% walked more vs. 49% of men), people with children in their household (59%) and people who classified their health as ‘very good’ (63%).

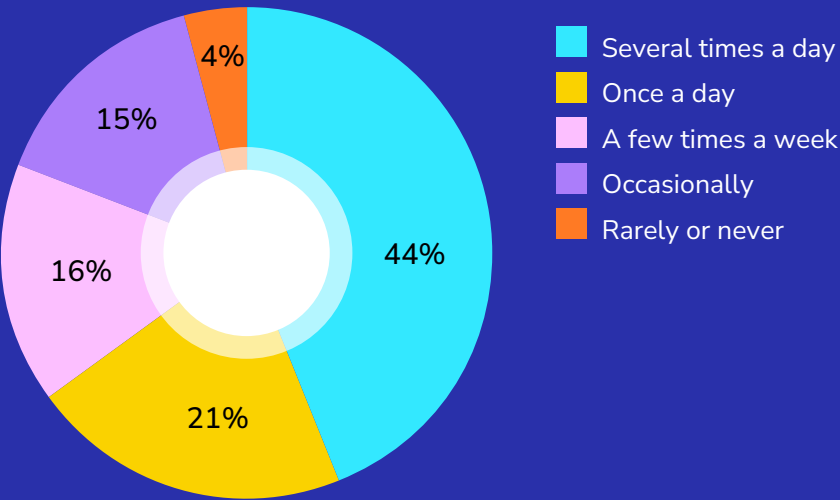


Figure 8: Wearables (based on those who use a wearable device)

Do people walk every day?

To what extent is walking and wheeling included in everyday routines?

52% stated that they typically walked or wheeled to shops that sell everyday necessities more than once a week, an increase from 44% in 2023. Other common reasons for frequent walking included visits to parks and green spaces (38% do so several times a week or more), and going to public transport links (30% do this several times a week or more).

Those aged under 45 were more likely to walk at least weekly to shops that sell things like milk and bread, to public transport or to leisure destinations like sports centres. People with children were somewhat more likely to walk to their nearest park or green space (65%) or to leisure destinations several times a week or daily.

Destinations	Every day	Several times a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	Once every two to three months	Less often	Never	Net several times a week or daily
The nearest shop that sells everyday 'necessities' like milk and bread	14%	38%	18%	9%	2%	6%	14%	52%
The nearest park, woodland or other 'green space'	12%	26%	19%	15%	6%	9%	13%	38%
Other clusters of shops and retailers nearby	7%	25%	24%	17%	3%	9%	15%	32%
The nearest public transport link, for example, a bus stop or train station	8%	22%	14%	15%	8%	14%	18%	30%
Leisure destinations e.g. sports centre	3%	16%	14%	12%	7%	18%	29%	19%
The nearest chemist/pharmacy	2%	6%	9%	26%	18%	22%	17%	9%
The nearest doctor's surgery	2%	5%	6%	16%	18%	30%	24%	7%

Figure 9: Walking and wheeling frequency by destination

Working from home and walking

Overall, around 2 in 3 of those who are currently working (full or part-time, including self-employed) stated that they had spent any of their time working from home (64%).

- None
- A small amount of time (less than 25%)
- Between a quarter and half of your time
- About half of your time
- Between half and three quarters of your time
- Most of your time (over 75%)
- All of your time

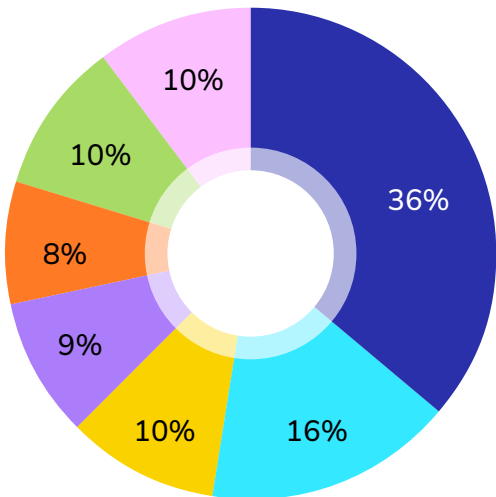
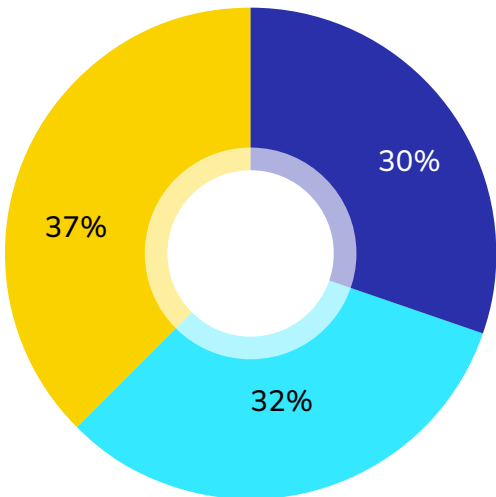


Figure 10: Amount of time spent working from home (based on those working full or part time or self-employed)

When asked whether working from home impacted on the amount of time they spent walking or wheeling on days they were working, responses were varied.

While 30% of those who work from home stated that they walked more because they worked from home, a slightly higher percentage (37%) stated that they walked less. The remaining third (32%) stated that working from home had no effect on the amount of time they spent walking.

Groups most likely to state that working from home increased the amount of time they spent walking or wheeling included those aged 16 to 34 (35% walked more), those with children at home (35% walked more) and dog owners (32% walked more).



- Walking/wheeling more because I work from home
- Working from home has no impact on amount of walking/wheeling
- Walking/wheeling less because I work from home

Figure 11: Impacts of working from home on time spent walking and wheeling

To what extent is convenience a factor when deciding to walk or wheel?

When asked to imagine they were moving to a new house in a different area, and to rate how important a number of factors would be when making a choice about where to move to, the ability to walk to local shops and facilities like schools, a good network of paths and pavements, and being within walking distance of a regular bus service were all considered as priorities by 50% or more of participants.

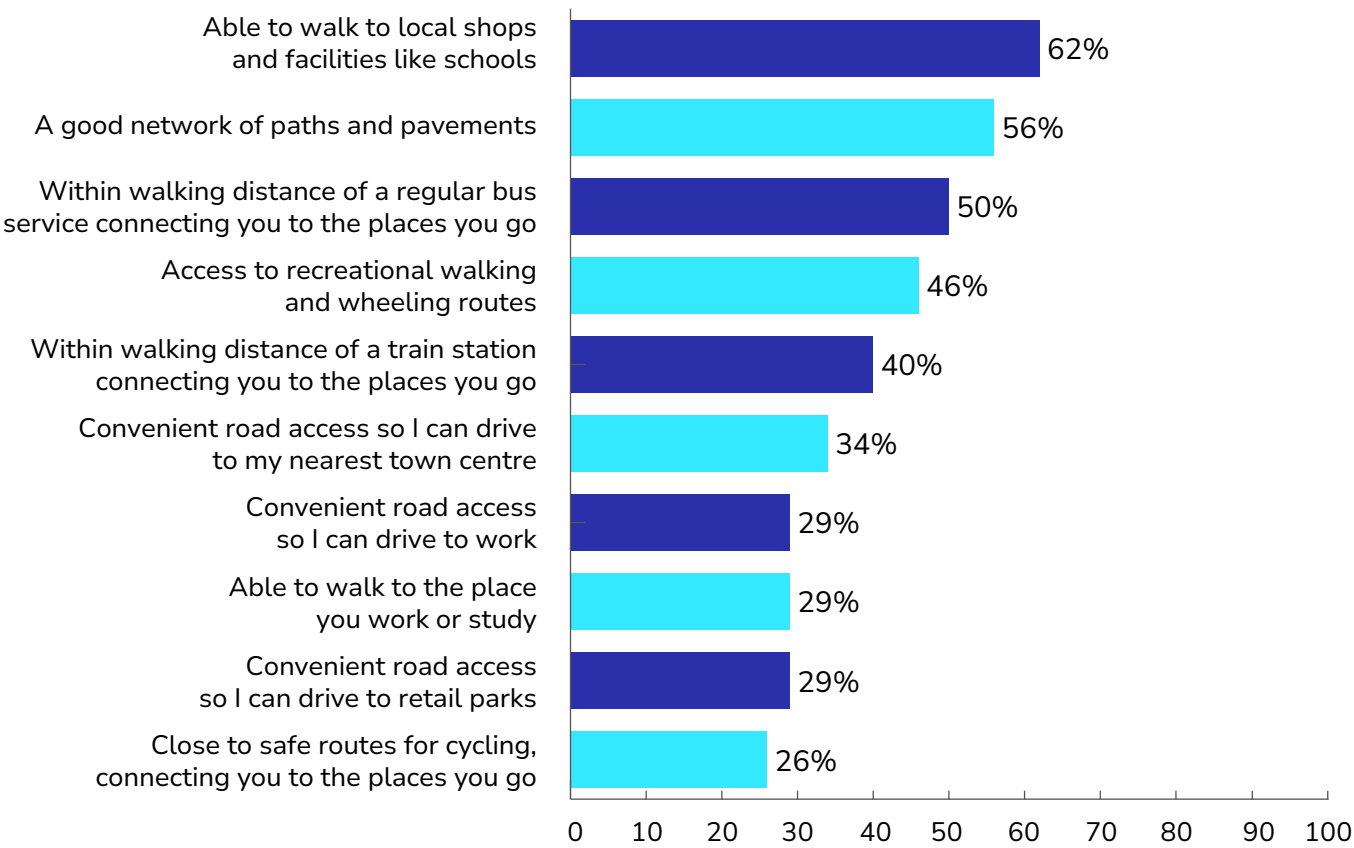


Figure 12a: Important factors when choosing where to live

In contrast, around a third or less rated convenient road access to the nearest town centre, to work or to retail parks as important (34%, 29% and 29% respectively). Being close to safe routes for cycling was chosen as important by just over a quarter (26%).

Responses varied between different population groups, particularly by age and sex. Women and people aged 55 and over were particularly likely to rate being able to walk to local amenities, a good network of paths and being

within walking distance of a regular bus service as priorities, while younger people were more likely to rate being able to walk or drive to their work or study as priorities.

Factors in choosing where to live	Total	Male	Female	16-34	35-54	55+
Able to walk to local shops and facilities like schools	62%	58%	66%	58%	60%	66%
A good network of paths and pavements	56%	53%	59%	54%	54%	60%
Within walking distance of a regular bus service connecting you to the places you go	50%	46%	53%	44%	43%	59%
Access to recreational walking and wheeling routes	46%	44%	47%	41%	44%	50%
Within walking distance of a train station connecting you to the places you go	40%	38%	41%	40%	38%	42%
Convenient road access so I can drive to my nearest town centre	34%	33%	35%	33%	33%	37%
Convenient road access so I can drive to work	29%	30%	29%	40%	30%	21%
Able to walk to the place you work or study	29%	28%	30%	39%	31%	20%

Figure 12b: Important factors if choosing where to live by sex and age (Statistically significantly higher results for sub group highlighted in **bold**)

66%
of over 55s feel it is important to be able to walk to local shops and facilities

What is the relationship between walking and wheeling and other modes of transport?

58% had walked to a public transport link such as a railway station or bus/tram stop as part of a longer journey during the previous month, an increase from 53% in 2023. This percentage was highest amongst people who walk every day (64%), people aged under 45 (67%), those who work full time (64%), those who self-report having ‘very good’ health (66%) and residents of urban central areas (66%).

On average journeys involving public transport consisted of 2.0 stages, a similar number to that recorded in the 2023 survey (1.9 stages). The most common mode of transport used was rail, followed by bus. The use of rail on these journeys has increased since 2019 (from 44% to 53%).

Journey details	2019	2023	2025
Average stages per journey	1.8	1.9	2
Modes used:			
Train	44%	51%	53%
Scheduled bus service/other bus coach	60%	49%	48%
Taxi	12%	13%	21%
Private car (own)	11%	13%	15%
Private car (as passenger)	5%	8%	12%
Plane	4%	7%	7%
Tram	5%	5%	8%
Ferry	4%	2%	4%
Car club	n/a	1%	4%

Figure 13: Details of journeys which involved walking/wheeling and public transport use (trends)

Where do people walk?

What types of place do people walk and wheel in?

As seen in previous years, the largest proportion of walking and wheeling took place in urban environments including roadside pavements, path networks away from the roadside, shopping malls and urban green spaces.

However, 2 in 3 (67%) had also walked in countryside or coastal locations within the previous month, with woodland and forests continuing to be the most visited type of place (32%) away from towns.

People aged under 35 were more likely to report walking in shopping malls (49% vs 41% for those aged 45 and over), those with children in their household were more likely to walk on a beach (33% vs 26% with no children) and rural residents were more likely to have walked in woodland (45% vs just 22% of those living in an urban central location).

Also, just 55% of people living in the 10% most deprived areas walked in the countryside or coast, compared to 68% amongst the rest of the population.

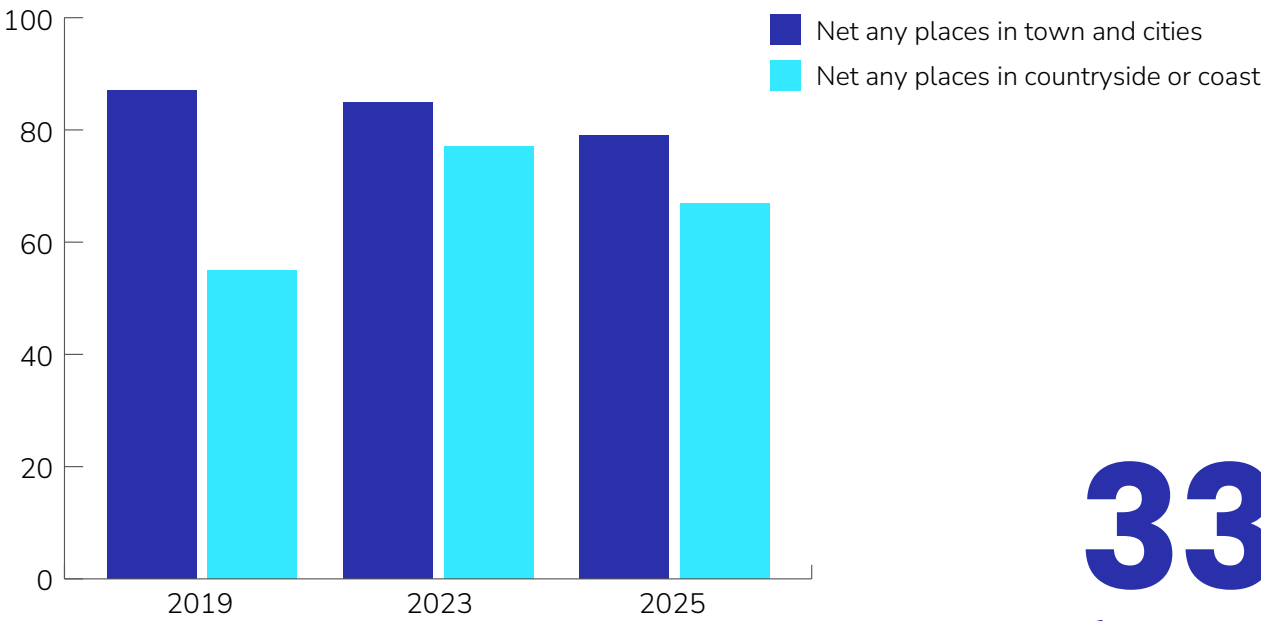


Figure 14: Places walked and wheeling in during past month (trends)

33% of households with children were more likely to walk on the beach

What do people think about their local community as a place to walk and wheel in?

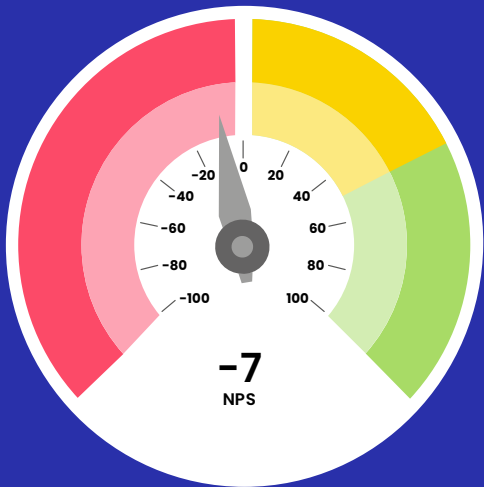
We asked how likely people would be to recommend their local area to a friend as a place for everyday walking or wheeling, on a scale from 0 to 10.

Their responses put them into 1 of 3 groups:

- » **‘Promoters’**
who are likely to recommend their area
- » **‘Passives’**
who are not enthusiastic enough to promote it
- » **‘Detractors’**
who are unlikely to recommend their area.

More Scottish adults were detractors (31%) than promoters (24%), with almost half (45%) in the passive group.

An overall Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters, with 100 being the highest score possible, and a good score being between 20 and 70. For Scotland overall, the total NPS was -7.



Likeliness to promote	%	NPS segment
0 – Very unlikely	1%	Detractors: 31%
1	1%	
2	1%	
3	2%	
4	4%	
5	10%	
6	12%	Passives: 45%
7	21%	
8	24%	
9	13%	Promoters: 24%
10 – Very likely	11%	
NPS	-7%	(% Promoters - % Detractors)

Figure 15: Net Promoter Score

The likelihood of recommending your local area varied by demographic and geography. People with children, from ethnic minority groups, living in urban centre areas, and residents of the 10% least deprived areas were more likely to recommend their area. People aged 16 to 24, 45 to 54, those with a long-term illness or disability, residents of urban outskirts areas, and, most notably, those living in the 10% most deprived areas, were the least likely to recommend their area.

Key group	%
Male	-5%
Female	-8%
16-24	-22%
25-34	8%
35-44	0%
45-54	-17%
55-64	-12%
65+	0%
Children in household	7%
No children in household	-15%
White ethnicity	-9%
Ethnic minority	24%
Long-term illness or disability	-14%
No long-term illness or disability	-2%
Urban – centre	5%
Urban – outskirts	-15%
Rural and Island	-7%
10% Most deprived	-25%
Mid 11%-89% SIMD	-6%
10% Least deprived	+30%

Figure 16: NPS – key groups

Participants were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction with a list of aspects relating to their local area. Five areas received a rating of extremely or quite good from over 2 in 3 – these were shops selling essential within easy walking distance (75%), feeling safe walking/wheeling during the day (72%), good quality green spaces (70%), public transport

connections within easy walking distance (69%) and schools within easy walking distance (68%). However, other areas received more varied ratings, including only around half (51%) providing a good rating in relation to their local streets and public areas being well cared for and appealing to spend time in.

Aspects to local area	Extremely poor	Quite poor	Neither good nor poor	Quite good	Extremely good	Net good
Shops selling essentials like groceries are within easy walking distance	3%	6%	14%	43%	32%	75%
Feeling safe if you are walking/wheeling alone during the day	3%	6%	18%	42%	30%	72%
Good quality green spaces which you can visit for leisure (e.g. parks)	2%	7%	19%	43%	27%	70%
Public transport connections like bus stops/train stations are within easy walking distance	4%	8%	17%	43%	26%	69%
Schools are within easy walking distance	2%	4%	18%	37%	31%	68%
Availability of walking routes connecting places within your local area	3%	9%	21%	44%	21%	65%
Other amenities like health centres are within easy walking distances	5%	10%	21%	41%	22%	63%
Access to affordable, reliable public transport	5%	11%	20%	40%	22%	62%
Feeling safe if you are walking/wheeling alone after dark	6%	12%	24%	37%	18%	55%
Availability of cycling routes connecting places within your local area	4%	9%	25%	35%	17%	52%
Streets and other public areas are well cared for and appealing to spend time in	5%	16%	26%	34%	17%	51%

Figure 17: Satisfaction with amenities in local area

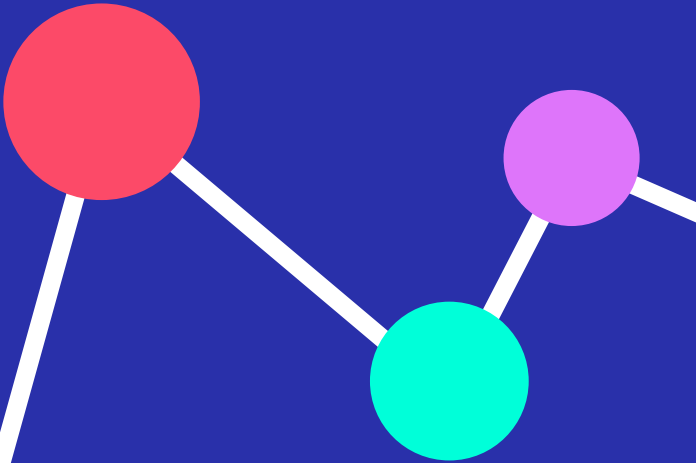
Ratings varied between different population groups, particularly by age and sex. Men were more likely than women to provide a higher rating for access to public transport, feeling safe after dark and streets and public areas being well cared for and appealing to spend time in. Younger people aged under 35 were also more likely to provide more positive ratings for a number of aspects.

Other variations in satisfaction levels across population groups reflected those seen for the overall Net Promoter Score rating, with the highest ratings provided by those living in urban central areas, residents of the least deprived areas and amongst those rating their health as very good and/or with no long-term illnesses or disabilities.

When asked to rate the importance of different amenities in their local area, the areas receiving the highest ratings were feeling safe when walking and wheeling (88% during the day, 87% after dark), streets and public areas being well cared for and appealing to be in (85%), and shops selling essentials within easy walking distance.

Across all of these areas, participants providing the highest importance ratings included those who walked most frequently, women, younger age groups and members of ethnic minorities.

“ Poor pavement conditions and a lack of safe crossings make it harder for me to walk or wheel as much as I would like each day.”



Where do people walk?

Local amenities	Not at all important	Not very important	Neither important nor unimportant	Quite important	Extremely important	Net important
Feeling safe if you are walking/wheeling alone during the day	1%	3%	8%	25%	61%	88%
Feeling safe if you are walking/wheeling alone after dark	1%	2%	9%	23%	62%	87%
Streets and other public areas are well cared for and appealing to spend time in	1%	3%	11%	41%	42%	85%
Shops selling essentials like groceries are within easy walking distance	1%	4%	11%	37%	46%	84%
Good quality green spaces which you can visit for leisure (e.g. parks)	1%	4%	12%	37%	44%	83%
Easy access to affordable, reliable public transport	2%	4%	12%	35%	44%	82%
Availability of walking routes connecting places within your local area	2%	3%	15%	43%	35%	81%
Public transport connections like bus stops/ train stations are within easy walking distance	2%	4%	13%	38%	41%	81%
Other amenities like health centres are within easy walking distances	2%	4%	15%	41%	36%	79%
Schools are within easy walking distance	16%	7%	19%	26%	27%	58%
Availability of cycling routes connecting places within your local area	12%	12%	23%	29%	21%	53%

Figure 18: Importance of amenities

Measuring the gap between the importance and satisfaction ratings provided for local amenities helps to identify areas which are not meeting public expectations. Overall, areas most likely to be rated as important but receiving lower quality ratings included streets and public areas being

well cared for and appealing to spend time in, feeling safe when walking or wheeling alone after dark, affordable, reliable public transport and feeling safe when walking or wheeling alone during the day.

Local amenities	Net important	Net good	Gap
Streets and other public areas are well cared for and appealing to spend time in	85%	51%	-34%
Feeling safe if you are walking/wheeling alone after dark	87%	55%	-32%
Access to affordable, reliable public transport	82%	62%	-20%
Feeling safe if you are walking/wheeling alone during the day	88%	72%	-16%
Availability of walking routes connecting places within your local area	81%	65%	-16%
Other amenities like health centres are within easy walking distances	79%	63%	-16%
Good quality green spaces which you can visit for leisure (e.g. parks)	83%	70%	-13%
Public transport connections like bus stops/train stations are within easy walking distance	81%	69%	-12%
Shops selling essentials like groceries are within easy walking distance	84%	75%	-9%
Availability of cycling routes connecting places within your local area	53%	52%	-1%
Schools are within easy walking distance	58%	68%	10%

Figure 19: ‘Gap’ between importance and satisfaction ratings

87% rated the importance of feeling safe if you are walking/wheeling alone during the day

Are local areas getting better or worse?

When asked to rate the suitability of their local area for walking and wheeling, and how this has changed in the last 2 years, overall, 40% agreed that the number of local services in their local area within walking distance decreased while just 25% disagreed with this statement. However, more positively, 39% agreed that bus route improvements had made it easier to get to places like shops, schools and work, while 27% disagreed with this statement.

When looking at net agreement, which compares the overall percentage agreeing with each of the statements with the percentage disagreeing, the most negative opinions related to the provision of seating, tables and signage on pavements.

Attitudes to walking and wheeling in last 2 years	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Net agreement (Total agree - total disagree)
The number of local services in my area within walking or wheeling distance has decreased in the last 2 years	15%	25%	29%	18%	7%	14
Bus route improvements have made it easier to get to places likes shops, schools or work in the last 2 years	14%	25%	26%	14%	13%	11
Pavements in my local area are in good condition and well-managed (e.g. free from potholes, gritted in winter)	13%	28%	20%	19%	16%	6
Improvements to paths have made it easier to walk or wheel to places likes shops, schools or work in the last 2 years	15%	22%	26%	19%	14%	5
The condition of paths and other places for walking or wheeling in my local area has improved in the last 2 years	12%	23%	25%	20%	16%	-1
The number of paths in my local area has increased in the last 2 years	11%	22%	24%	20%	16%	-2
Pavements have more seating, tables, and signage (e.g. A-boards) on them than 2 years ago	11%	19%	23%	20%	21%	-12

Figure 20: Attitudes to walking and wheeling in local area and changes in last 2 years

A number of issues were experienced by people walking or wheeling in their local areas. The most common issues were cars parked on pavements, poorly maintained pavements and littering, including dog poo (experienced by 54%, 45% and 43% respectively).

On some occasions, the issues experienced had forced people to change their route, or made them less likely to walk or wheel in the same location again. Cars parked on pavements and poorly maintained pavements were most likely to force people to change their route (25% and 20% respectively).

Issues experienced	Experienced	Changed route
Cars parked on pavements	54%	25%
Poorly maintained pavements	45%	20%
Littering, including dog poo	43%	17%
Cyclists on the pavement	38%	12%
Roads that are difficult to cross	36%	15%
High levels of traffic, including noise and pollution	27%	12%
Pavements that are poorly lit	27%	11%
Overgrown path	25%	11%
Waiting too long at pedestrian crossings	19%	8%
Antisocial behaviour from other walkers/wheelers	16%	8%
An aggressive or intimidating animal, such as a dog	15%	8%
Motorbike/quad-bike users on paths	12%	5%
A lack of, or poor, signage	11%	3%
A restrictive sign – for example 'Private', 'No Entry', 'Keep Out'	8%	4%
A locked gate across path/route	8%	4%
Racism from other people you encounter	4%	2%
A gate or other point in route that cannot accommodate your wheelchair or mobility scooter	3%	2%
Net any issues	91%	77%

Figure 21: Issues experienced when walking recently

Where do people walk?

Women were more likely than men to experience several of the issues listed, including parked cars, litter, poorly lit pavements. Over half of those aged 55 and over reported

concerns relating to poorly maintained pavements and cars parked on pavements. These issues were also more likely to impact people with a long-term illness or disability.



Figure 22: Issues experienced when walking recently by sex and age (Statistically significantly higher results for sub group highlighted with **pattern**)

Comparing the issues experienced in 2025 with those reported in 2023 suggests an increase in the proportions experiencing cars parked on pavements and roads that are difficult to cross, while smaller percentages reported issues relating to litter or overgrown paths.

69% had noticed any pavement or path faults (e.g. pot holes, trip hazards or broken pedestrian crossing lights) while walking or wheeling in their local area recently, a slightly higher percentage than in the 2023 survey (63%). Groups most likely to have noticed faults included those with a long-term illness or disability, residents of urban outskirts areas and residents of the 10% most deprived areas.

Key groups	%
Male	69%
Female	70%
16-24	71%
25-34	63%
35-44	71%
45-54	69%
55-64	72%
65+	69%
Children in household	70%
No children in household	69%
White ethnicity	70%
Ethnic minority	65%
Long-term illness or disability	74%
No long-term illness or disability	66%
Urban – centre	66%
Urban – outskirts	74%
Rural and Island	65%
10% Most deprived	74%
Mid 11%-89% SIMD	70%
10% Least deprived	68%

Figure 23: Incidence of pavement and path faults by key population groups

Safety

Views on the levels of safety walking or wheeling locally are varied, particularly after dark. Comparing average ratings (from 0 for 'not at all safe' to 10 for 'completely safe') the lowest ratings were for walking and wheeling after dark, especially for children, disabled people and women.

Key groups	During the day	After dark
Children aged 8 to 10	6.7	4.8
Children aged 11 to 12	7.0	5.1
Children aged 13 to 15	6.5	5.4
Disabled people	6.8	5.4
Women on their own	6.1	5.5
Children aged 16 or over	6.9	5.8
People who are members of ethnic minorities	7.8	6
Men on their own	6.4	7

Figure 24: Perceived safety levels for walking and wheeling in local area

Where do people walk?

Comparing the ratings provided by different population groups, these varied most significantly by sex, with men providing higher ratings than women for every group except ‘men on their own’. These variations were most notable in relation to walking and wheeling after dark as shown below.

Key groups Mean score out of 10	Average rating – after dark					
	Total	Male	Female	16–34	35–54	55+
Children aged between 8 and 10	4.8	5.3	4.5	4.6	4.9	5
Children aged 11 or 12	5.1	5.5	4.8	5	5.2	5.2
Children aged 13 to 15	5.4	5.7	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.4
Disabled people	5.4	5.7	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.6
Women on their own	5.5	5.8	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.5
Children aged 16 or over	5.8	6.2	5.6	5.8	5.8	5.9
People who are members of ethnic minorities	6	6.2	5.8	5.9	6	6
Men on their own	7	6.9	7.1	7.3	7	6.7

Figure 25: Perceived safety levels for walking and wheeling in local area after dark by sex and age (Statistically significantly higher results for sub group highlighted in **bold**)

69% had recently noticed pavement and path faults in their local area

Ratings also varied in relation to where people lived, including much lower ratings in the most deprived areas than the least deprived.

Key groups Mean score out of 10	Average rating – after dark			
	TOTAL	10% most deprived	Mid 11%–89% SIMD	10% least deprived
Children aged 8 to 10	4.8	4.1	4.9	5.4
Children aged 11 to 12	5.1	4.4	5.2	5.5
Children aged 13 to 15	5.4	4.6	5.4	5.9
Disabled people	5.4	4.8	5.6	5.7
Women on their own	5.5	4.7	5.6	6.1
Children aged 16 or over	5.8	5.2	5.9	6.3
People who are members of ethnic minorities	6	5.1	6.1	6.6
Men on their own	7	6.2	7.1	7.7

Figure 26: Perceived safety levels for walking and wheeling in local area after dark by SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)



How accessible to home are the places that could be walked or wheeled to?

On average, the actual length of time required to walk or wheel to different types of local amenities broadly reflected the durations people would be willing to walk.

While just over half of the population stated that they were within a 10-minute walk of a public transport link or shop that sells essentials, most would need to walk or wheel somewhat further to reach amenities such as their nearest secondary school, doctor’s surgery, leisure centre or their place of work. For many the distance to these places would be beyond what could feasibly be walked or wheeled.

Destinations	Up to 10 minutes	11-20 minutes	21 minutes to half an hour	31 minutes to an hour	Longer	Not applicable – too far or too difficult to walk or wheel	Average (minutes)
The nearest shop that sells everyday ‘necessities’ like milk and bread	54%	23%	10%	5%	3%	5%	13.3
The nearest public transport link, for example, a bus stop or train station	54%	18%	13%	7%	3%	5%	14.4
The nearest primary school	38%	25%	14%	9%	3%	10%	16.3
The nearest park, woodland or other ‘green space’	39%	25%	17%	10%	5%	5%	18.2
The nearest chemist/pharmacy	33%	30%	17%	9%	4%	6%	18.3
The nearest pub/restaurant	35%	24%	18%	11%	4%	7%	18.6
Other clusters of shops and retailers nearby	23%	32%	19%	11%	5%	10%	20.3
The nearest secondary school	17%	24%	20%	15%	7%	16%	22.7
The nearest doctor’s surgery	22%	26%	20%	14%	8%	10%	22.8
The nearest leisure centre	17%	23%	23%	16%	8%	13%	24.5
The place where you work	15%	16%	15%	15%	14%	24%	25.8

Figure 27: Actual time it would take to walk or wheel to different types of destination

Scots were asked how long they would be prepared to walk or wheel to get to several local amenities. On average, people are willing to walk for around 14 minutes to reach the nearest shops that sell everyday essentials, and 15 minutes to reach their nearest public transport link.

On average, people are willing to walk for longer for a number of other destinations including leisure centres (average 24 minutes) and work (average 28 minutes).

When the same question was asked in the 2023 survey, slightly shorter durations were provided on average (11 minutes to nearest shop, 11 minutes to public transport link), suggesting that there has been a slight increase in willingness to walk for a longer duration at the total population level.

Destinations	Up to 10 minutes	11-20 minutes	21 minutes to half an hour	31 minutes to an hour	Longer	Average (minutes)
The nearest shop that sells everyday ‘necessities’ like milk and bread	46%	33%	14%	5%	1%	14.1
The nearest public transport link, for example, a bus stop or train station	47%	27%	18%	6%	2%	15
The nearest primary school	34%	35%	19%	9%	3%	17.8
The nearest chemist/pharmacy	31%	39%	19%	8%	2%	17.8
The nearest pub/restaurant	28%	34%	25%	10%	3%	19.5
Other clusters of shops and retailers nearby	23%	37%	25%	11%	3%	20.4
The nearest park, woodland or other ‘green space’	29%	32%	23%	11%	5%	20.6
The nearest doctor’s surgery	23%	34%	24%	12%	7%	22.8
The nearest secondary school	18%	36%	26%	14%	6%	23.5
The nearest leisure centre	16%	35%	30%	13%	6%	23.8
The place where you work	15%	30%	26%	20%	9%	27.7

Figure 28: Duration prepared to walk or wheel to different types of destination

» **20-minute neighbourhoods** are neighbourhoods where it is easy for people to meet most of their everyday needs in a short, convenient and pleasant 20-minute return walk. For example, having local shops, schools, green space and public transport options within a 10-minute walk (or 20-minute round trip) of your home.

Across all of the places listed, participants would be prepared to walk for an average of 21 minutes (compared to 18 minutes in 2023). This overall average was higher than average amongst people aged 16 to 24, people with children in their household, members of ethnic minorities and residents of rural and island areas.

When provided with the description (left) about 20-minute neighbourhoods and asked to what extent they supported or opposed the creation of them, 72% stated that they supported their creation, a similar percentage to that recorded in 2023 (71%).

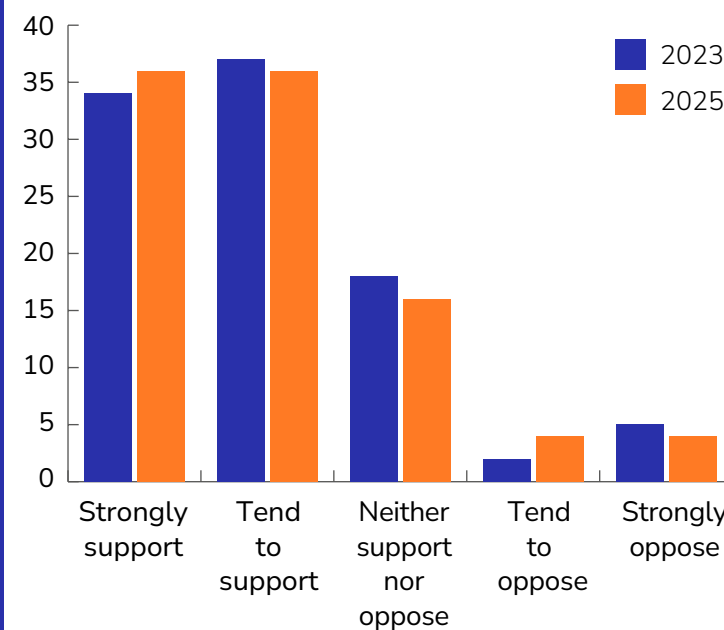


Figure 29: Levels of support for 20-minute neighbourhoods (2023 and 2025)

Some of the responses provided are below:

“

It makes daily life more convenient, reduces travel time, and encourages walking and community connection.

“

Everything you need close by with easy access.

“

Encourages people to walk to boost their fitness and mental health.

“

You start to recognise faces, support local shops, and feel like you belong.

Asked to type in their reasons for supporting 20-minute neighbourhoods, the most common reasons mentioned related to:

- » Convenience and accessibility (35%)
- » Community building and social interaction (14%)
- » Reduced car use and environmental (11%)
- » Health and wellbeing (11%).

Population groups most likely to strongly support the idea of 20-minute neighbourhoods included women (38%), people with children in their household (41%), members of ethnic minorities (48%) and residents of urban central areas (42%).

8% of participants did not support 20-minute neighbourhoods, some due to the feeling that the concept would not benefit them in their circumstances (e.g. in a rural area) while others mentioned wider concerns they had heard online, such as schemes having the potential to restrict their movement outside of local areas/impacting upon their civil liberties.

“

From what I've read they'd restrict people from going outwith their neighbourhood.

“

I live in a remote rural area with no facilities within a 20-minute walking radius.

About Walking Scotland

Walking Scotland is a charity that helps make walking and wheeling a part of everyday life. We promote the benefits of walking and wheeling on our physical, social, and mental health. Our programmes connect communities and inspire positive behaviour change. We also improve places and spaces to walk and wheel.

We're an advocate for making walking and wheeling inclusive. We work with partners and local communities to reduce barriers. This ensures everyone has the chance to walk or wheel everywhere they go. By focusing on walking and wheeling, we're helping to solve some of Scotland's biggest challenges, from health inequalities to the climate-nature emergency.



Appendix

A note on analysis

Weighting was applied in the analysis of data to ensure that the findings presented in this report can be considered as representative of the adult population.

Please note the following points when using the survey results:

- » Throughout the survey participants were asked about walking and wheeling. A statement was provided to define wheeling: "By wheeling we mean using a wheelchair or mobility scooter."
- » Any trends or variations between results highlighted in the text are statistically significant unless stated otherwise.

Responses to all questions are reported as claimed by the nationally representative sample. However, it should be noted that in some cases participants may claim to have walked more or less frequently than they do. For example, social-desirability bias, which is the tendency of individuals to answer questions in a way they believe is socially acceptable rather than providing their true thoughts or behaviours, may lead some to say that they have walked more than they have. Something called the telescoping effect means that people sometimes perceive recent events as being more remote than they are, and distant events as being more recent than they are. This might have led respondents to think that the walking they have done was more recent than it actually was.

Appendix

Survey questions

Figure(s)	Question
1 and 2	How frequently, if ever, do you walk or wheel for the following purposes?
3 (in appendix)	Which of the following, if any, have you done in the last month, where walking or wheeling was the main part of the journey?
4	To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about walking and wheeling?
5 (in appendix)	To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about walking? (Note changes in statements presented may impact on comparability of results between years).
6	What, if anything, makes it harder for you to walk or wheel as much as you would like to on a day-to-day basis? (Open ended question)
7	Which of the following, if any, would encourage you to walk or wheel more often?
8	How often do you check or pay attention to your daily steps or wheeling on your wearable device? (Based on those who use a wearable device)
9	How frequently, if ever, do you walk or wheel to each of the following places?
10	What proportion of your time working during the last month, if any, was spent working from home?
11	Do you think that working from home has any effect on the amount of time you spend walking (or wheeling) on days when you are working?
12a and 12b	Imagine you were moving house to a different area. In this imaginary situation how important would each of the following be in your choice of where to live?
13	How many stages did this journey include in total? (Asked of those who had had walked or wheeled to a railway station, bus/tram stop or other transport terminal as part of a longer journey in the last month)
14	In which, if any, of the following places have you walked or wheeling during the past month?

Figure(s)	Question
15 and 16	Overall, how likely are you to recommend your area to a friend as a place for everyday walking or wheeling? (0 being very unlikely and 10 being very likely)
17 and 19	And how would you rate the quality of where you live in relation to the same list (thinking about travel and amenities in your local area)?
18 and 19	More generally, thinking about travel and amenities in your local area, how important are each of the following to you personally?
20	To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about walking and wheeling in your local area?
21 and 22	While walking or wheeling in your local area recently which, if any, of the following have you experienced?
22	And which of these, if any, caused you to change where you walked or wheel (e.g. take a different route) or make you less likely to walk or wheel in this place again?
23	While walking or wheeling in your local area recently, have you noticed any pavement or path faults (e.g. pot holes, trip hazards, broken pedestrian crossing lights, etc)?
24, 25 and 26	On a scale from 0 for not at all safe to 10 for completely safe, how would you rate the safety of your local area as a place for the following people to walk or wheel unaccompanied without worry?
27	Roughly how long would it actually take you to walk or wheel from home to each of the following places? (Excludes Don't know/Not applicable responses)
28	Personally, how long would you be prepared to walk or wheel to get to each of the following places?
29	Given this description and anything else you know about the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods, to what extent do you support or oppose the creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods?

Motivations and attitudes data

Motivations in past month	2019	2023	2025
Net – Leisure or exercise	61%	59%	66%
Going to railway station, bus/tram stop or other public transport terminal	55%	53%	58%
Going to local shops and services	63%	67%	57%
Exercise	n/a	n/a	53%
Leisure	n/a	n/a	45%
Visiting family or friends	40%	41%	42%
Exercising the dog	30%	26%	36%
Going to work	21%	23%	32%
Going to school	n/a	5%	10%
Net – Any of above	95%	89%	87%

Figure 3: Walking and wheeling during the previous month

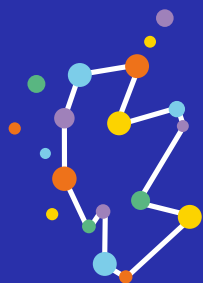
Attitudes to walking and wheeling	2019	2023	2025
I enjoy it because it is good for my health	78%	84%	78%
I choose to walk or wheel because it benefits my physical health	n/a	n/a	76%
I choose to walk or wheel because it benefits my mental health/wellbeing	n/a	n/a	74%
I enjoy it because it clears my head and helps me concentrate	n/a	77%	73%
I enjoy it because it helps me relax	72%	80%	72%
I would like to be able to walk/wheel more often for leisure purposes	n/a	69%	68%
I would like to be able to walk/wheel more often for routine purposes (e.g. going to shops, going to work)	n/a	60%	63%
Where possible, I prefer to walk/wheel because it is better for nature than taking the car	n/a	n/a	62%
Where possible, I prefer to walk/wheel because it is more affordable	58%	60%	61%
Where possible, I prefer to walk/wheel because it less likely to contribute to climate change than taking the car	n/a	n/a	55%
Where possible, I prefer to walk/wheel because it is more convenient than taking the car	51%	53%	52%
I walk/wheel because I don't have access to a car	32%	29%	34%
I only walk/wheel places if I have no option	n/a	30%	33%

Figure 5: Attitudes to walking and wheeling – 2019, 2023, 2025





56 Degree Insight have over 50 years' combined market research experience, with a wealth of expertise across a large range of business sectors including tourism, travel, the natural environment, energy, sport and recreation, culture, food & drink and the Scottish consumer landscape.



Walking Scotland

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